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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 6 November 1997, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Dumitriu ..... (Romania)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 85: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space *(continued)* (A/50/307; A/52/20; A/C.4/52/L.8)

1. **Mr. Kumar** (India), introducing draft resolution A/C.4/52/L.8, said that the omnibus draft resolution had the same format and content as in previous years, but there were some differences. At its thirty-fourth session the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had concentrated on the topic of the modelling of the space debris environment and risk assessment. The Committee had decided that the special theme for the thirty-fifth session of the Subcommittee should be "Scientific and technical aspects and applications of space-based meteorology". The Legal Subcommittee, which had held its thirty-sixth session in 1997, had reached a consensus agreement to include in its agenda a new item entitled "Review of the status of the five international legal instruments governing outer space". While endorsing that decision the Committee had also decided to hold further informal consultations on the specific proposals already made for possible new agenda items for the Legal Subcommittee.

2. At its fortieth session in 1997 the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had accomplished a major reform of its working methods and made significant progress in its preparatory work for UNISPACE III. As a result of intensive discussions during the inter-sessional period, consensus agreement had been reached on the measures relating to the composition and election of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, and on their agenda structures and the duration of their sessions. The decisions taken by the Committee on those matters were reflected in paragraphs 10 and 11 of the draft resolution.

3. As requested by the General Assembly, the Committee, acting as the Preparatory Committee of UNISPACE III, had recommended to the General Assembly that the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space should be convened at the United Nations Office at Vienna from 19 to 30 July 1999 as a special session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space open to all States Members of the United Nations. It had also made several other recommendations, which were reflected in the paragraphs 23 to 24 and 26 to 27 of the draft resolution. The Preparatory Committee and its Advisory Committee would continue their preparations for UNISPACE III at their 1998 sessions. The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had been requested to reconvene at its thirty-fifth session the Working Group of the Whole in order to complete its evaluation of the implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and to assist the Advisory Committee in its preparatory work for UNISPACE III.

4. It was noted in paragraph 25 of the draft resolution that, in preparation for UNISPACE III, Chile and Malaysia had offered to host United Nations regional meetings on space technology and applications for development, and Tunisia had indicated its willingness in principle to host a similar meeting in Africa in 1998.

5. In keeping with traditional practice, he requested that the omnibus draft resolution should be adopted without a vote.

6. **Mr. Doudech** (Tunisia) said that international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space was becoming increasingly important for a growing number of countries owing, in particular, to the significant progress in the use of space technology in the implementation of various projects, including development projects.

7. His country had a growing interest in space technology. His Government's policy was designed to enhance Tunisia's potential in that sphere, in particular by establishing a national remote-sensing centre, which played a very important role in the protection of the environment. His country relied to a great extent on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space but noted that the great backwardness of the developing countries in that area prevented many of them from using the benefits of space technology. It was becoming increasingly evident that in order to fight effectively against natural disasters and resolve many of the environmental problems it was necessary to secure the united efforts of all countries and cooperation on the basis of partnership.

8. His delegation highly appreciated the work of the organizations of the United Nations system and its specialized agencies in carrying out the recommendations of UNISPACE-82 and activities under the United Nations Space Applications Programme, in particular the holding of workshops, study courses and seminars, which brought great benefits to the developing countries.

9. The assistance furnished to Africa, in particular on the basis of the exchange of information between African and European scientists, was very important in that respect. His delegation noted that the information acquired with the aid of space technology could be made available to the developing countries at reasonable prices which they could afford.

10. It regretted that resources were insufficient for the comprehensive implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE-82. Given the current budgetary constraints in the United Nations, the only means of mobilizing resources was to increase the volume of voluntary contributions.

11. His country was satisfied with the progress of the preparations for UNISPACE III and was ready to make its contribution to the work, in particular by hosting a preparatory meeting for Africa in 1998.

12. The Tunisian delegation highly appreciated the important role of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and reiterated its wish to become a member of the Committee and make a contribution to its work in that capacity; it hoped that at its next session the Committee would be able to consider the question of expanding its membership in the light of the requests made by interested States.

13. **Mr. Islam** (Pakistan) said that his country welcomed the decision to hold UNISPACE III as a special session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and hoped that the recommendations of the Conference would pay particular attention to topics of vital importance for the developing countries. There must be no discrimination against States lacking the necessary resources to take advantage of the conquest of outer space, which was a universal achievement.

14. To ensure that outer space was used for peaceful purposes, it was necessary to strengthen and further develop legal norms governing the uses of outer space. In that context, his delegation welcomed the initiative of the Legal Subcommittee to review the status of the five international treaties governing outer space. There were no formal channels of communication for coordinating the activities of the Conference on Disarmament and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. His delegation therefore supported the recent proposal that the Conference should keep the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space informed of progress made by it on matters relating to the peaceful uses of outer space. In addition, the promotion of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes would be best served by the adoption of a comprehensive convention to prevent an arms race in outer space. States with significant space capabilities could contribute meaningfully to the goal of preventing such an arms race.

15. With regard to space debris, it was essential to continue the search for ways and means to handle the thousands of fragments of satellite launchers hovering around the Earth. There was a serious threat of collision of debris in space, including debris with nuclear power sources on board. Member States with nuclear-powered satellites should provide complete information on any safety measures that they had taken. International cooperation in the applications of space technology for environmental monitoring and sustainable development should also be promoted.

16. The benefits of outer space should be shared justly and fairly; there should be an effective legal mechanism for regulating cooperation in space technology; the Conference on Disarmament and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space should coordinate their activities; ways and means of effectively handling space debris should be evolved; the implementation of agreements on the peaceful application of space science must be ensured; remote sensing data should be shared among Member States; and developing countries should have access to the spin-off benefits of space technology.

17. **Mr. Tarassenko** (Russian Federation) said that the launch, 40 years earlier, of the first artificial Earth satellite had marked the beginning of the widespread practical use of space for the good of humankind. In that connection, noting the importance of new developments in Russian space activity for international cooperation, he said that his country's space establishment continued to function in a stable manner. The number of launches in the current year would be approximately the same as in the previous year, the orbital group that directed every aspect of the space programme was being maintained and the manned flight programme was continuing on board the Russian space station "Mir", which over its 11 years in operation had played host to over 80 cosmonauts and astronauts from various countries. The "Mir" space station could be considered an experimental laboratory, in which work was carried out on new technologies, on the principles of constructing and operating complex systems and on models for the optimum functioning of the human operator. In that context, the various untoward incidents that had occurred on the space station in 1997, with which both the crew and ground services had coped successfully, could be viewed as useful experiences that were needed to ensure the safety of any future international space station.

18. He noted that on 31 May 1997 in Japan, the heads of the space agencies of participating States had initialled an intergovernmental agreement on the creation of an international space station. They had approved drawings of the station, established a timetable for its launch into orbit and emphasized their firm intention of proceeding to its development as early as the following year.

19. Bilateral cooperation with other countries was also being actively pursued in the field of space research. Other countries' satellites continued to be launched from the "Proton" rocket, an international credit line had been set up under the "Sea Start" project to finance the Russian side of work on the project and all necessary conditions were in place for starting launches in the near future from a floating platform at sea. The Russian-French joint venture "Starsem" was operating successfully and preparations were in hand for the launch under the "Globastar" programme. Other international projects were also under way, including work on satellites and remote sensing.

20. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space could not stay on the sidelines of the reforms taking place within the United Nations, and the Russian Federation supported the consensus proposals for reforming the organizational aspects of its work. His delegation was convinced that the new principles of rotation and the new composition of the Committee's bureau would enable it to carry on functioning efficiently into the next millennium. His delegation could not, however, agree with suggestions that would effectively downgrade the status and role of the Committee and its subcommittees and transfer to various technical organizations and forums its task of elaborating political and legal principles for the regulation of space activity. That course of action would have an extremely adverse effect on the whole approach to multilateral cooperation in the field of space exploration.

21. His delegation welcomed the consensus decision on including in the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee a new item on the status of the five basic international space treaties. Unfortunately, the constructive and fruitful discussion on another item of the Subcommittee's agenda — "Utilization of geostationary orbits" — had not produced any tangible results. He expressed gratitude to the German delegation, which had worked hard to arrive at a mutually acceptable decision on the basis of its working paper. He hoped that its efforts would not be in vain and that the discussion that had taken place would serve as a sound basis for future debate on that agenda item.

22. At its most recent session, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had adopted the agenda for the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III). In accordance with the Committee's decisions, the Conference should act as a kind of space achievements "fair" for all the countries of the world and make a real contribution to the development of practical cooperation in the space sector. Any attempts to politicize the event, however, could have a negative impact on the aims and budget of the Conference.

23. Lastly, the successful development of international space cooperation on a regional and bilateral basis, as well as the establishment of a lasting legal basis for such cooperation, could be no substitute for the progressive development and modification of the universal norms and principles governing it. One important and urgent task facing the Committee was to put bilateral practice on a sound, unified basis.

24. **Mr. Semenenko** (Ukraine) said that the exploration of outer space and the use of space technology for peaceful purposes for the benefit of all countries had had an increasing impact on social and economic progress in all spheres of human activity over the past decades. His delegation welcomed the current positive trends in the use of outer space for peaceful purposes, along with the reduction of expenditure on military programmes and the reorientation of space activity to the settling of the urgent problems of mankind. In that connection he noted that Ukraine was also making a significant contribution to that process. Having proclaimed the principle of the exploration of outer space for exclusively peaceful purposes, Ukraine was seeking to integrate its military and ground space infrastructure into the civilian structures of the national space agency. That process was to be finalized by the year 2000.

25. His delegation shared the views expressed by many other delegations which had commended the activities of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. It felt that that Committee was playing an important role in promoting international strategies to seek ways and means for the peaceful exploration of outer space, the development of international space cooperation, the exchange of scientific and technological information between developed and developing countries, and the coordination of regional and interregional cooperation mechanisms. His delegation welcomed the recommendations and decisions contained in the report on that Committee's activities (A/52/20).

26. At the same time, in view of the ongoing process of reform in the United Nations, the activities of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subsidiary bodies and their working methods obviously needed further streamlining and renewal. In that regard, his delegation hoped that increased coordination of efforts between that Committee and other United Nations bodies, including those dealing with disarmament issues, would be helpful in that process.

27. Since the first years of its independence, Ukraine had been consistently undertaking measures towards strengthening its status as an aerospace State, and was taking

an active part in international cooperation within the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subcommittees. Currently Ukraine was carrying out its new State outer space programme which had been elaborated with due account for the recommendations of UNISPACE-82. That multifaceted programme, which was to continue to the year 2002, was aimed at further developing national outer space technologies and the demilitarization process, and also strengthening international cooperation in that field. Within the framework of the programme, SS-18 strategic missiles were to be converted into outer space "Dnipro" launch vehicles and a new type of satellite was to be developed.

28. Ukraine aspired to broad international cooperation in the field of the peaceful exploration of outer space. Ukraine's successful participation in a number of joint international space projects over recent years demonstrated that it possessed the necessary capabilities to develop that cooperation on a broader scale. One demonstration of the international recognition of Ukraine's achievements in that field was the participation of Leonid Kadenyuk, the first cosmonaut from independent Ukraine, in the 16-day United States Shuttle Columbia mission scheduled to start on 19 November 1997. In that context, he also drew attention to the initiative put forward by Ukraine to set up an international research centre in the city of Yevpatoriya (Crimea) on the basis of the national centre for the control and testing of space facilities, which had a unique land infrastructure and technological facilities.

29. **Mr. Jasentuliyana** (Director, Office for Outer Space Affairs, United Nations Secretariat) said that he had been pleased to note the satisfaction expressed by many Member States with the reforms carried out by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in 1997, and also various measures introduced by that Committee in order to rationalize its work and save conference-servicing resources. As the secretariat of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the Office for Outer Space Affairs was prepared to explore innovative measures on a continuous basis to further enhance the optimum utilization of that Committee's resources. He had also been pleased to note the strong support by Member States for the convening of UNISPACE III. The Conference would address issues of global concern. To the extent feasible, the costs of the Conference would be kept within the existing resources available to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its secretariat. As the executive secretariat of the Conference, the Office would strive to make the Conference a success in further promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space into the next millennium, through partnership with Member States, international organizations and the private sector. At the Conference Governments, inter-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and representatives of the private sector would participate as equal partners. In that connection he called on all Member States, on the basis of paragraph 26 of draft resolution A/C.4/52/L.8, to consider making voluntary contributions to strengthen the work of the secretariat and encouraged the relevant national space agencies and the private sector to do likewise.

Draft resolution A/C.4/52/L.8

30. **Mr. Gao Feng** (China) said that his delegation supported the draft resolution and noted that in paragraph 25, several words had been omitted from the formulation which had been considered on the previous day. He proposed that, in order to avoid misunderstandings, the Committee should revert to the original formulation.

31. **Mr. Jasentuliyana** (Director, Office for Outer Space Affairs, United Nations Secretariat) said that he agreed with that comment; in the third line of paragraph 25 of draft resolution A/C.4/52/L.8, a reference to Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia and the Pacific, respectively, should be added after the word "for development".

32. **Mr. Coutts** said that that amendment must be reflected in the Spanish text as well.

33. **The Chairman** said that the Secretariat would make the corresponding changes to all the language versions of the draft resolution.

34. **Mr. Islam** (Pakistan) asked whether a similar change could be made to the part of paragraph 25 which referred to Tunisia's willingness to host a similar regional meeting in Africa.

35. **Mr. Jasentuliyana** (Director, Office for Outer Space Affairs, United Nations Secretariat) said that the regional meetings for the Latin American and Caribbean and the Asian and Pacific regions had already been confirmed and were under preparation, while Tunisia had only expressed its willingness in principle to host a similar meeting; it would be advisable to retain the proposed amendments in the text.

36. **The Chairman** suggested that, in the absence of objections, draft resolution A/C.4/52/L.8 should be adopted without a vote.

37. *Draft resolution A/C.4/52/L.8, as orally amended, was adopted.*

38. **The Chairman** said that the Committee had completed its consideration of agenda item 85.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.